



**WA FOOTBALL COMMISSION**

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# Junior Community Umpiring

Law and Interpretation Update - 2023

This presentation is developed to provide guidance and clarity around the application of the following Laws and Law Interpretations in Junior Community Football:

- 2023 AFL Law Interpretations
- High Contact and Drawing High Contact via a Duck, Shrug, etc
- Dangerous Tackles
- Insufficient Intent
- Deliberate Rushed Behind



2023

# AFL Law Interpretations

Prior to the commencement of the AFL 2023 season, the AFL advised of three Law interpretation changes – see article link for more information ([Reference](#)).

These law interpretation changes at AFL level include:

1. Drawing a 50m Penalty with a fake handball
2. Making an immediate decision regarding standing the mark or leaving the protected area
3. Change to Set shot on goal warning

In Junior Community Football, the following law interpretation changes will **NOT** be applied:

1. Drawing a 50m Penalty with a fake handball
2. Making an immediate decision regarding standing the mark or leaving the protected area

*Rationale:* these changes have been brought in to address tactics that have emerged at AFL level and are not relevant to Junior Community Football.

In Junior Community Football, the following law interpretation change **will** be applied:

1. Set shot on goal warning: players will no longer be given an alert by the Umpire at the 15-second mark of their set shot, instead just receiving a warning at 25 seconds (via a double whistle). Players are allowed 30 seconds to start their set-shot approach.

*Rationale:* this is a procedural change that simplifies the Umpire's role at a set shot.



High Contact

Drawing High Contact via a Duck, Shrug, etc

The following clarifies the application of the AFL interpretation around players contributing to high contact.

In Junior Community Football, the priority is to protect the players, especially from high contact.

In the Year 11/12 Male and Female competitions, players are becoming more adept in drawing high contact. This is a practice that should be discouraged due to players putting their head in a vulnerable position.

Umpires will apply the Law according to the following guidelines.

## YEAR 11/12 MALE AND FEMALE COMPETITIONS

Where the tackle is reasonably applied and the ball carrier is responsible for the high contact via a shrug, drop, arm lift or duck, **play on** should be called.

## ALL OTHER COMPETITIONS

All high contact shall be paid as a Free Kick regardless if the ball carrier was responsible for the high contact via a shrug, drop, arm lift or duck.



Where the tackle is reasonably applied and the ball carrier is responsible for the high contact via a shrug, drop, arm lift or duck, **play on** should be called.

	Situation	Result
<b>Front On</b>	Head down over the ball trying to gain possession	Free Kick for HT (as long as tackler on the move)
<b>Ducking</b>	Elects to drop head from higher position	Must successfully dispose of ball otherwise HTB
<b>Drive</b>	Leads with head and moves into tackler who is stationary or near stationary	Must successfully dispose of ball otherwise HTB
<b>Shrugs</b>	Tackle around shoulder area and arm pushes tackle up	Play On
<b>Drop</b>	At knees or body to gain head high tackle	Play On

For more information regarding the application of these interpretations and for video examples please view the umpire coaching module below.

High Contact – [Umpire Coaching Module](#)



Rough Conduct

Dangerous Tackles

# Dangerous Tackles in Junior Community Football

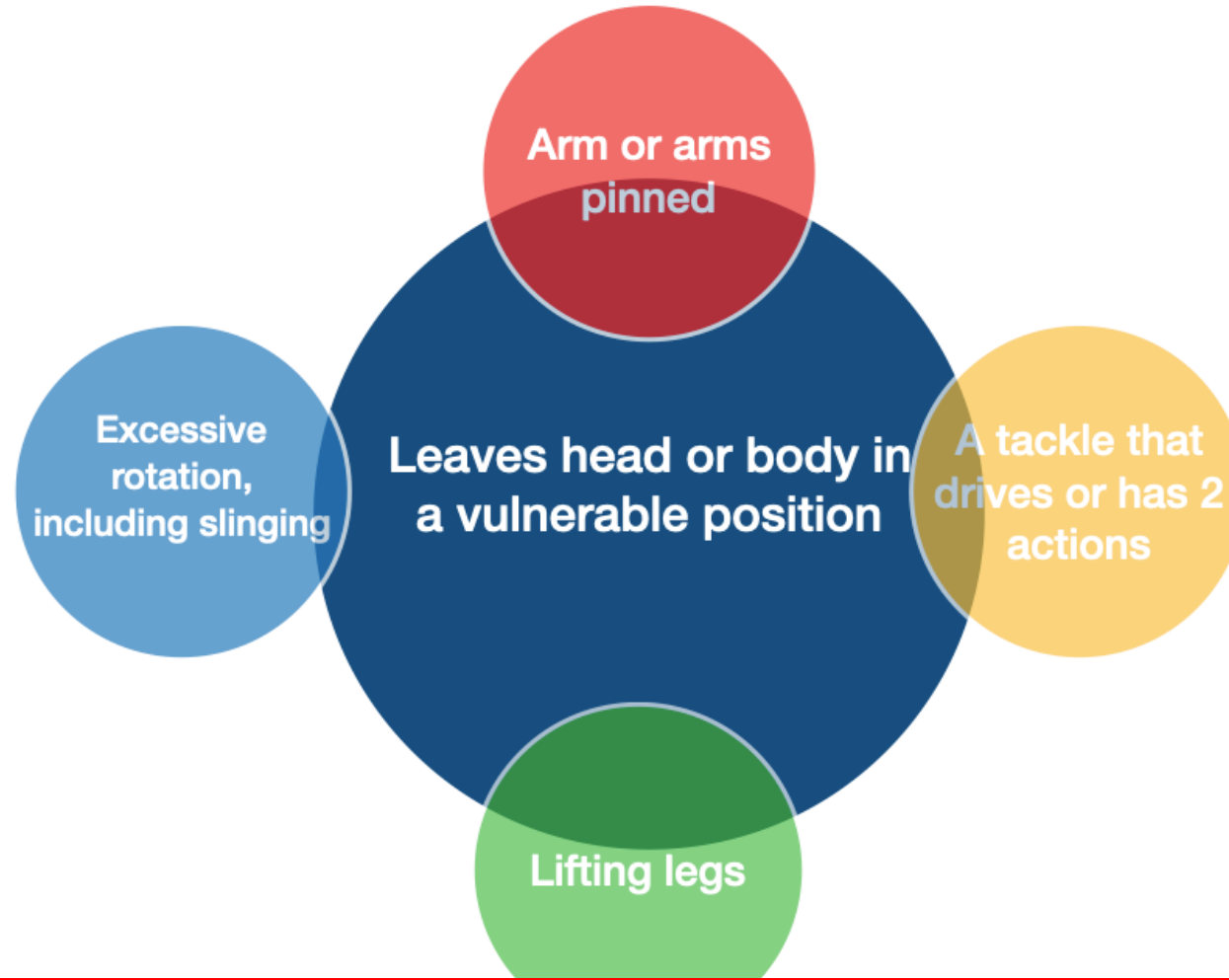


The following provides guidance and clarity around the application of Yellow Cards and Red Cards in relation to rough conduct (dangerous tackles) in Junior Community Football.

Players when tackling should not place their opponent (head or body) in a vulnerable position which is inherently dangerous. A dangerous tackle could be considered when the level of force is more than is normally expected in a given situation.

## **CUES:**

- Leaves head or body in a vulnerable position
- Excessive rotation, including slinging
- Arm or arms pinned
- Lifting legs
- A tackle that drives or has 2 actions



**FORCE is more than is normally expected in a given situation**

Umpires are coached to understand what a dangerous tackle looks like by being aware of the abovementioned cues.

Umpires are also encouraged to delay or change their decision if appropriate (e.g. they have paid a Holding the Ball Free Kick but then assess that the tackle was dangerous and therefore change their decision to a Dangerous Tackle Free Kick).

In a Two or Three Umpire System, the Support Umpire is also encouraged to pay a Free Kick if they assess the tackle as dangerous.

# Dangerous Tackles in Junior Community Football

In addition to paying a Free Kick, the Umpire has the capacity to also issue a Yellow or Red Card (reportable offence). The following guidelines are designed to assist Umpires in determining whether a Yellow or Red Card should be paid for a Dangerous Tackle.

<b>Impact/Severity</b>	<b>Head Contact</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
LOW impact/severity	Head does NOT hit the ground	FREE KICK
LOW impact/severity	Head DOES hit the ground	YELLOW CARD
HIGH impact/severity	Head does NOT hit the ground	YELLOW CARD
HIGH impact/severity	Head DOES hit the ground	RED CARD (REPORTABLE OFFENCE)



Other circumstances which may warrant an instant Red Card - tackles that are deemed to be inherently dangerous.

For example:

- Slinging motion where the ball player does not have control to brace themselves for landing.
- When a player is lifted off the ground and not returned to ground with reasonable care.
- When the tackler pins the arms of the ball player, and they have no way to brace themselves for landing.

The Umpire is required to use their judgement and common sense to assess all elements of the tackle when deciding whether to issue a Yellow Card or Red Card.

When assessing the impact/severity of the tackle, the Umpire should consider the intent of the tackler, the cues that are present in the tackling action and the level of force.

The Umpire should also take into consideration the age group and what level of force is reasonable at that level of competition.

Umpires are to evaluate the action of the tackle and not the outcome (e.g. whether the player is injured) when assessing the impact/severity of the tackle.

Clubs and Coaches are strongly encouraged to educate players about how to tackle and be tackled in a safe manner. Clubs should continue to reinforce correct tackling techniques to all players at training.

The vast majority of Junior Umpires are learning, and this part of the game is very difficult to adjudicate. Regardless of any decision or non-decision, it is vitally important that Umpires are not subjected to abusive behaviour or negative comments as this has the potential to affect the Umpire's confidence and be detrimental to their decision making.

For more information regarding the application of these interpretations and for video examples please view the umpire coaching modules below.

Rough Conduct – [Umpire Coaching Module](#)

Dangerous Tackles (Free Kick, Yellow Card, Red Card guidelines) – [Umpire Coaching Module](#)



# Insufficient Intent

In Year 11/12 Male Competitions, AFL Law 18.10.2 (Insufficient Intent) will apply as per below.

**A Free Kick shall be awarded against a Player who kicks, handballs or forces the football over the boundary line and does not demonstrate sufficient intent to keep the football in play.**

As a general rule, if a Player kicks the ball up the line to open space with no players in the vicinity, a Free Kick will result if the ball lands nearer to the boundary line from where it was kicked.

Any player who kicks the ball off the ground runs the risk of a Free Kick being awarded against them.

A free kick will be awarded against a player who kicks, handballs, carries or forces the football over the Boundary Line and does not demonstrate sufficient intent to keep the ball in play

The force and direction of the ball can outweigh the skill error

## CUES

Force of kick adequate

Direction of kick towards line

No players in immediate vicinity

Kick further away from the boundary line to where it landed



# Deliberate Rushed Behind



In all Youth age (Year 7 and above) competitions, AFL Law 18.11 (Deliberate Rushed Behinds) will apply as per below.

**A Free Kick shall be awarded against a Player from the defending team who intentionally kicks, handballs or forces the football over the attacking team's goal line or behind line or onto one of the attacking team's goal posts.**

## Instructions to Umpires

- The Umpire should provide the benefit of the doubt to the defender.
- The Umpire should also take into consideration the age group and associated skill level of the players.

A Deliberate Rushed Behind free kick will be paid if any one (or more) of the following 4 criteria can be applied.

## ALL DRB MUST BE THE RESULT OF AN INTENTIONAL ACT

A player cannot rush a behind if he is outside the top of the kick off line (9 m) and its extension to the behind posts

A player who has had time and space in which to dispose of the ball cannot rush a behind

A player who is not considered under immediate physical pressure cannot rush a behind (work on fact, not perceived).

From a ruck contest, if an opposition ruckman hits the ball through for a rushed behind on the full, this will be adjudicated as a DRB

## ALL DRB MUST BE THE RESULT OF AN INTENTIONAL ACT



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